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Spring
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GUIDE**
Inside!

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HUGS**

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BEST WAY TO GET SERVED MORE QUICKLY AT THE BAR: Have your money ready and know what you want.

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OF THE WEEK

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Let the luck of the Irish guide your weekend

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THE SHORTLIST



Pussy Riot declare their
'boner for politics' at
sold-out Turf show
At citypages.com

STEVE COHEN

THE STAT SHEET

4

The number of Minnesota Catholic dioceses that have declared bankruptcy over sexual predation suits after St. Cloud filed last week

48

The number of Minnesota counties where judges have yet to use their power to force domestic abusers to temporarily give up their guns

34

The number of innocent Americans who die from guns compared to every one killed in self-defense

1

North American ranking of MSP among airports of its size, according to Airports Council International

"The fact that that's even an admissible defense is disgusting. If I kill a priest, can I cite 'rape-y priest panic' as my defense? It's just as logical as 'gay panic.'"

Reader Jason Bistodeau responds to "Minnesota could outlaw 'gay panic' defense this year, but probably won't," at citypages.com.

SEE NO EVIL

AN INVESTIGATION into sexual harassment complaints against former state Rep. Tony Cornish (R-Vernon Center) is complete. You paid for it. You just won't be able to see it.

Citing "privacy concerns" for the victims, House leaders decided to keep secret Cornish's sins—as well as any evidence that they failed to act, despite Cornish's longstanding reputation as a pervert.

Such worries could easily be circumvented by redacting names and identity-revealing details. But the Legislature has conveniently exempted itself from open records laws.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

Minnesotans tortured by the **VACUUM SALESMEN** who just won't leave

The swift and shameful death of **MCNALLY SMITH** College of Music

Meet the 2018 **MINNESOTA HIGH SCHOOL ALL-HOCKEY HAIR TEAM** [Video]

7 fast facts about **BECCA KUFRIN**, Minnesota native and next star of ABC's *The Bachelorette*

The Twin Cities—aka **'PAGANISTAN'**—will host a world gathering of witches

GAY PANIC

In Minnesota, you can still use scary gay guys as a defense for murder

On March 11, 2012, Kenneth McDaniel's body lay near the entrance to his business, the Cinema X adult theater in Ottumwa, Iowa. His head had been bludgeoned by a crow bar. His neck showed signs of strangulation.

Security footage revealed a suspect entering the theater and leaving with a black bag in tow.

The state charged Bruce Pollard with first-degree murder and first-degree robbery. Pollard claimed self-defense, alleging that McDaniel had sat "real close" to him, and he panicked.

The jury rejected this defense and found Pollard guilty of both counts.

Pollard's excuse for murder is an example of a "gay panic" defense, when people claim an LGBTQ person's unwanted advances caused them to injure or kill in self-defense.

Sen. Scott Dibble (DFL-Minneapolis)

has introduced a bill that would ban the defense in Minnesota. Yet it's now stuck in the Judiciary and Public Safety Finance and Policy committee, headed by Sen. Warren Limmer (R-Maple Grove), who happens to be a chief author on the 2012 constitutional amendment that would have banned gay marriage.

"I'm going to talk to [Limmer] and try to persuade him that [the bill] has merit," Dibble says. "Frankly, I am not hopeful he'll give me a hearing... but I'm going to try."

Defenses like Pollard's have been used since the 1960s. It was employed in the infamous case of Matthew Shepard, the Wyoming man tortured to death in 1998, and Scott Amedure, who was killed after declaring his crush on another man on an unaired episode of *The Jenny Jones Show*.

In both of those cases, the defense failed, but even having it as an option brings up "very fraught issues, because... [it] really



ED ANDRIESKI, AP

further stigmatizes and prejudice against the LGBT community," says Christy Mallory, a lawyer from the Williams Institute, a sexual orientation research center at UCLA.

California banned the defense in 2014. Illinois followed suit this year.

Lawyers have largely used the defense in three ways: to support arguments that showed that someone was provoked due to learning sexual orientation, to show the defendant was under a temporary mental impairment, or as a matter of self-defense.

In 2015, the American Bar Association passed a resolution against the defense. "When you think about it, it's pretty unusual for attorneys to ban any other [defenses]," Dibble says.

He's hoping to at least broach the conversation in Minnesota, but his bill has no Republican coauthors. A companion House bill authored by Rep. Erin Maye Quade (DFL-Apple Valley) has also yet to even receive a hearing in the GOP-dominated legislature. —DAVE CLAREY

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Sun Country for Rich Men

Stop thinking of Sun Country as a Minnesota airline. Or one with a soul.

Next time you buy a ticket to fly Sun Country, try picturing Howard Stern and Martha Stewart, cheerily singing along to Sir Elton John on a magnificent Long Island estate.

Leon Black turned 60 in 2011, and celebrated the day with the opulence one might expect of an investment billionaire. Black's wife wore a dress designed by Vera Wang—who also showed up to party, as did then-New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Sir Elton was paid \$1 million for the birthday gig, where guests like the CEO of Goldman Sachs munched on a buffet of snow crab and seared foie gras. Sounds expensive, but, as Stern told his radio listeners, to a man like Leon Black, “a billion dollars is like 10 dollars to us.”

Earlier this month, Forbes estimated Black, cofounder of the Apollo Global Management equity fund, to have a net worth of \$6.6 billion, about \$1 billion better than his 2017 position. Next year, Black should be sitting even prettier.

Since the mid-2000s, Apollo has amassed a portfolio's worth of name brands: Harrah's, the gambling interest behind Caesars Palace and other casinos; Jacuzzi; textbook publishers McGraw-Hill; Chuck E. Cheese's; and the three-headed real estate leviathan of Sotheby's, Century 21, and Coldwell Banker.

In December, Apollo took to the skies, announcing plans to acquire Sun Country Airlines for an as-yet-undisclosed amount. The deal ends the ownership run of brothers Mark and Marty Davis, notoriously likable southern Minnesota natives who grew up on a family dairy farm. The Davises bought Sun Country in a 2011 bankruptcy auction for \$34 million, then steered the airline out of a near-death-spiral triggered by the

previous owner, Tom Petters, who'd tied Sun Country's finances to his Ponzi scheme.

Sun Country was launched in 1983 by Minnesota pilots and flight attendants, who noticed unmet need for affordable flights to pleasant locales. That business model has held for decades: Last year, Sun Country's biggest markets, behind its million-plus annual fliers from the Twin Cities, were tourist destinations: Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York, and Orlando.

Sun Country has never tried to compete with volume flights or destinations, instead selling affordable tickets to folks who appreciate local owners and award-winning customer service. That's why Rhonda was happy to work there. That and the flight benefits. (“Rhonda” is a pseudonym; Sun Country does not allow employees to speak openly with media.)

Though past retirement age, she enjoyed her duties as a desk agent. Almost everyone on both sides of the transaction was a Minnesotan, married to one, or just happy to be visiting.

“Our agents had the mindset we could look at the people on the other side of the desk and relate to them,” Rhonda says. “I think Sun Country was maybe unique in that way to any other airline.”

Sun Country also didn't gouge fliers with fees, nor jam them together as if each plane were a roll of quarters. Despite this greedless streak, the airline made a little money—about \$20 million profit in 2017, about \$15 million the year before. That wasn't enough, not even for the Davis brothers, who last summer installed Jude Erickson, formerly of Allegiant Airlines, as Sun Country's CEO.

Within months, Sun Country announced plans to charge customers for carry-ons

(up to \$40) and checked bags (\$20). Those who wished to pick their seat—previously for free—would now pay up to \$35. Sun Country also pledged to install “thinner” seats. Not because it noticed customers losing weight. An additional 18 asses per plane will increase passenger loads by 11 percent. Your misery is Sun Country's profit.

All this was before Sun Country was bought by investment bankers. Expect it to get worse. Soon after the purchase announcement, Sun Country said it was laying off 350 people in Minnesota. Rhonda was among them. Not to worry, she and her co-workers were informed. They could reapply to work for Global Aviation Services, the Canadian outfit to which Sun Country outsourced its desk service.

There were just a couple catches. Rhonda's pay of \$14 an hour would drop to \$12.50, and her ability to hop on an open Sun Country seat would drop five levels, from “standby1” to “standby6,” which would rank her a lower priority than other Sun Country workers' friends. Not even their relatives, their friends.

Rhonda doesn't need the money. “For a lot of my younger co-workers, this is their living. It's them I feel bad for.” She wasn't comfortable working for these New York investment guys anyway. “I don't know that the Sun Country that's coming is one that I would be proud to represent,” she says.

And that's without knowing about the owners' budding friendship with Jared Kushner. On the last day of February, the New York Times revealed that Kushner—husband to Ivanka Trump, son-in-law and at-large advisor to Donald—had taken White House meetings with banking and investment representatives. Among them:



Mike Mullen

Apollo Global Management.

Joshua Harris, who'd co-founded the company with Leon Black, “met on multiple occasions” with Kushner, ostensibly to talk about a possible job for Harris in the Trump administration. That didn't happen. Here's what did:

Apollo floated a \$184 million loan to Kushner's real estate company, which helped it refinance its mortgage on a Chicago skyscraper. One month later, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) dropped an investigation into Apollo Global Management, quietly killing an inquiry into how it reported financial results.

Leon Black was not at those White House meetings. But he was at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in 2016, seated next to Kushner, a few months before Election Day. Maybe someday when you fly Sun Country, you'll picture someone getting hauled in to testify in front of Congress. Or indicted.

Rhonda's done with Sun Country, but she's holding on to her job just long enough to get her daughter a cheap flight for spring break. Good for her. It might be the last nice thing Sun Country does for anyone around here. [@](#)

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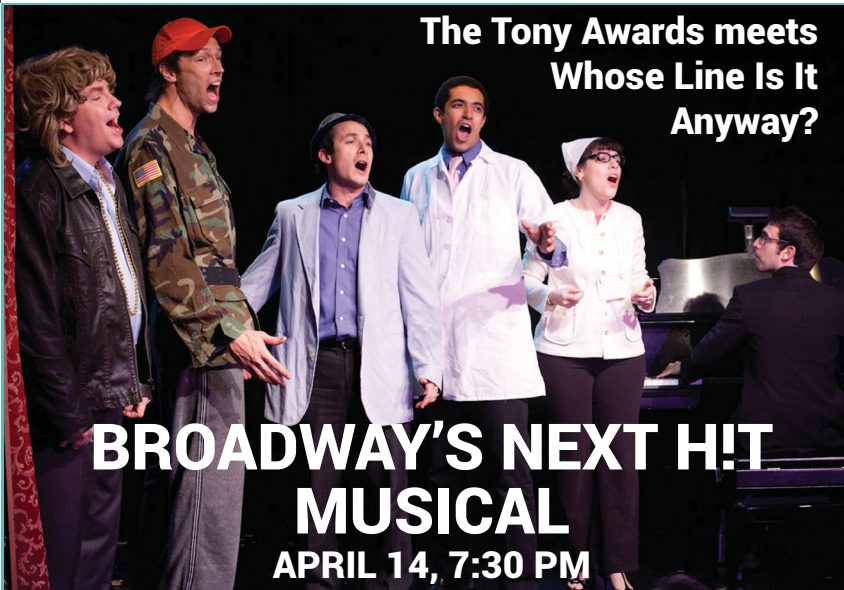
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PHOTOS BY PIERRE WARE



IT'S 12:30 P.M. ON A WEDNESDAY. Outside of the Weisman Art Museum, hundreds of University of Minnesota students are wandering between classes, heads down, just trying to get through the week.

Meanwhile, a tall, thin man in metallic-blue pants, a mustard-colored sweater, and a necktie around his head is holding a sign that reads, "Bad Advice."

"Hey, do you want some bad advice?" he says to one passerby. She looks confused but intrigued. Skeptically, she agrees.

"Okay, first thing: Throw your backpack off the bridge. Then, call your parents and tell them you're quitting school," he says.

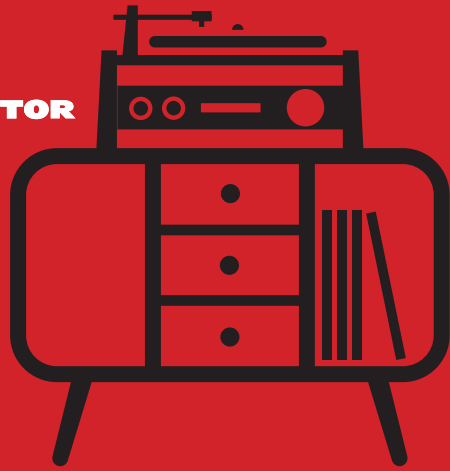
She laughs. He laughs. Then he holds up a sign that says, "Free Hugs." She gives him a hug without a second thought before hustling toward her next destination.

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Gateway HUGS

Misha Estrin is making friends
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PIERRE WARE

A comedian, model, speed-friender, and all-around unique individual, Estrin can be easily spotted at events all over the Twin Cities, often sporting a full-body tiger costume and armed with a plethora of eye-catching, head-scratching signs saying anything from “Free Shrugs” to “Ignore Me.”

But who is he, really?

“My dad thinks I’m a genius who is going nowhere in life,” says Estrin.

And his opinion?

“Do you know that person in your life who is always happy, connected, and weirding people out?” he asks. “Every moment, I do something to create connection in the universe between people. My purpose on this planet is to make people feel good about themselves.”

While that sounds like hyperbole, Estrin is very committed to his cause, thanks to his own personal journey.

“I used to be very introverted and depressed. I had no friends until I was 20,” he says. “I was worthless in every social situation, and the only sense of importance I had was from a video game I’d play with people who I knew I’d never meet in real life.”

With no real direction or feeling of acceptance, it took some self-reflection and a lot of discomfort to change his outlook.

“I fell in love with a girl, and everything changed,” Estrin explains. “I felt like I couldn’t connect with this person because I wasn’t good enough and had nothing to offer. So I started reading self-help books. I watched videos about how to go on a date. I studied up on body language. I pushed myself to be in social situations. I would go to a coffee shop and make myself talk to 20 people for five minutes and take notes. I hated it, but it made me a better person.”

Yes, he life-hacked how to make friends. And it worked.

One of the friends he’s made over the past few years is Margarita Lyadova, a student at the U of M.

“When I first met him, I had no idea what was up with this guy,” she laughs. “And I thought there was no way he was for real. But he’s always really nice to be around and super funny. Although when he’s wearing more normal clothes and not out doing crazy stuff it’s easier to get to know him better.”

Always self-aware, Estrin agrees with his friend’s observation.

“Sometimes when I’m out with someone in just a one-on-one situation, I’ll get distracted because I want to engage other people and create moments,” he says. “But then they’re just sitting there like, ‘Okay, now I’m just watching you do a thing.’ So I’m working on being more present and engaged with people in those types of situations.”

* * *

After Estrin became more comfortable in his own skin, he decided to try standup comedy. A few years ago, he was preparing for a show on Valentine’s Day when a friend suggested he hold a speed-dating event beforehand as a way to draw more people.

“I did no marketing at all,” Estrin says. “Hundreds of people RSVP’d and showed up. That’s when I realized that this is what people want. They want to connect with each other, and I can help give that to them.”

Instead of hosting more traditional speed-dating events, he decided to switch things up, organizing speed-friending happenings all over the Twin Cities.

“Every event is beautiful,” he says. “You see people talking and hanging out afterwards. They’re making plans to get together later. They’re creating connec-

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UPCOMING SHOWS

- 03/16 SPAG HEDDY W/ ELIMINATE & KRIS CAYDEN
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- 03/22 DYING FETUS & THY ART IS MURDER
- 03/23 DATSIK W/ SPACE JESUS, RIOT TEN, SWAGE & BARELY ALIVE B2B VIRTUAL RIOT
- 03/24 DATSIK W/ SPACE JESUS, RIOT TEN, SWAGE & 12TH PLANET
- 03/29 WHIPPED CREAM
- 03/30 YULTRON W/ PARKER
- 03/31 BLACKGUMMY W/ NOTAKER
- 04/05 FLAW W/ CO-OP & THE CROWNED
- 04/05 SNAVS X KUURO
- 04/06 J PHELPS W/ CHIME & JARVIS
- 04/07 PARTY THIEVES W/ RICKY REMEDY
- 04/07 THE SWORD W/ KING BUFFALO
- 04/08 TIMEFLIES
- 04/12 DIGI TOUR: ARCTIC LIGHTS
- 04/12 STYLUST BEATS & ESSEKS
- 04/13 JAYCODE W/ FRANCIS DERELLE
- 04/14 PAPADOSIO W/ BLUETECH
- 04/14 HYPER FUTURE TOUR FT. MUST DIE!, LAXX + TISOKI
- 04/20 GANJA WHITE NIGHT - NIGHT 1 W/ IVY LAB, MT EDEN, MR BILL & TERNION SOUND
- 04/21 GANJA WHITE NIGHT - NIGHT 2 W/ DIRT MONKEY, SUBTRONICS + MORE!
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- 04/24 INJURY RESERVE W/ JPEGMafia
- 04/26 JACK BEATS W/ BORN DIRTY
- 04/27 BOOMBOX CARTEL W/ OSHI & MONTELL2099
- 05/04 EHIDE W/ HI I'M GHOST
- 05/05 MITIS W/ PARTY NAILS & PRXZM
- 05/12 UZ W/ STOOKI SOUND
- 05/18 TESSERACT W/ PLINI & ASTRONOID
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PIERRE WARE

tions. I believe that is my purpose in life: to help make those connections.”

He has helped put together dozens of speed-friending events with different themes, including speed-friending for women, geeks, hipsters, cosplayers, and those in the LGBTQ community. (You can find upcoming speed-friending events on Estrin’s website, speedfriendingmn.com.)

Estrin has also continued to evolve and work on his own ability to connect with people. That includes his ever-changing wardrobe of scarves, jackets, and eye-catching accessories.

“I think the way I dress helps me to create more of a connection,” he says. “When you’re dressed up in something different or unique, it gives people an excuse to approach you and start a conversation when they might not have otherwise.”

From festivals to random nights out, Estrin says that he has found a way to engage strangers, make new connections, and create friendships that only a few years ago would have seemed out of reach.

“I’ve had people approach me because of the outfits I’m wearing, and invite me to bars or parties to hang out with them,” he says excitedly. “It’s so incredible, and it makes me want to empower other people to do the same thing. I want to help connect the world.”

* * *

Back on the U of M campus, Estrin stops a couple chatting on the sidewalk.

“Would you like some dating advice from a dating expert?” he asks. The girl and her friend both laugh, not sure if he’s being serious. “Wait, let’s do this instead,” he says, handing each of them

a sign that reads, “Dating Expert.” Next, he stops other people, asking if they’d like some advice from one of the newly christened dating experts. Surprisingly, people agree to listen, and suddenly he has become a mere supporting player in this weird, funny, fantastic interaction.

“Make sure you listen to what your girlfriend is saying and why she’s feeling that way,” the girl offers to her newfound friend and relationship advisee. They both laugh, but the level of honesty and thoughtfulness in the moment doesn’t appear to be lost on either of them. Meanwhile, Estrin stands off to the side, beaming.

“I love being able to create small moments that change people’s days,” Estrin says. “When I first started doing this, I would have never let someone else touch my signs, because I wanted to have control and have it be my thing. Now I want to help other people do what I do. I don’t need it to be about me.”

But is this all real? At times, Estrin is hard to crack. One second it’s like there’s a big joke going on in his mind and no one else gets it. The next, he’s speaking from the most vulnerable part of his soul, articulating things usually left unsaid. And the next he’s eating peanut butter straight from a jar on a street corner.

Regardless of whether you know him intimately or have simply passed him on the sidewalk, Estrin is something of a mascot of life. He’s an example of how people should strive to be with each other. And he’s a reminder that everyone has something weird, funny, caring, and beautiful inside of them.

“People forget that they’re special,” he says without a hint of irony. “Part of making connections is helping people appreciate themselves.”

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If to dine well is to be transported, then forgive me when I briefly wonder: Where the hell am I?

Coming up for air in the middle of a crab-leg-cracking feast, finding myself surrounded by a kaleidoscopic jellyfish mural, a neon-red crab sign, and a shark suspended from the stories-high ceiling, I realize I've lost all sense of place and time. Not only because a perfectly steamed crab has that transcendent effect on me, but because Octo Fishbar, Tim McKee's anchor restaurant in the new Market House Collaborative, is unlike any other place in Minnesota.

In the Market House building in Lowertown, the former home of Heartland, a single floor is host to three, soon to be four, operations: Octo Fishbar in the open atrium, the face-to-face counters of Peterson Farms meat and Almanac fish in a little market nook, the inimitable Salty Tart bakery in a separate cafe space, and in due time, the second location of Birch's on the Lake, a brewpub for which McKee will handle the menu. If that isn't dizzying enough, the clusters of seating in Octo Fishbar's open space create distinct dining environments. The giant u-shaped bar and adjacent tables seem plucked from an industrial-chic hotel lobby. Not 30 feet away, the chef's table area feels like you're eating fresh from some coastal fish market's counter. The closest you'll get to a standard dining ambiance is in the cozy area near that jellyfish mural.

Predictably, every single one of these seating areas is packed. As the James Beard Award-winning former head chef of La Belle Vie, McKee has one of the best pedigrees in the Twin Cities. His first step toward Octo began when he set down his title of culinary director of Parasole Restaurant Holdings (Chino Latino, Manny's, etc.) to become a humble fishmonger. (He was, in fact, the senior vice president for development at the Fish Guys, but a less glamorous post nonetheless.) The move was refreshing. He bowed out of the limelight for a deep dive into the world of marine delicacies,

MCKEE'S SEAS

Tim McKee's Octo Fishbar brings the shore to St. Paul

BY HANNAH SAYLE



LUCY HAWTHORNE

before surfacing again here, in St. Paul, to prove that if anyone can perfect seafood in flyover country, it's McKee.

In other words, you should expect a wait, sometimes even when you've made a reservation. This is where the open space and the giant bar work in Octo's favor. Grab

a cocktail or two (we recommend the El Caribe, a not-too-sweet Hurricane, and the genuinely spicy margarita), and enjoy wandering around the marketplace until the hostess retrieves you.

If the surrounds of Octo Fishbar are eclectic, the menu is a Jules Vernian jaunt,

from Bologna to Boston to Osaka to Guerrero, Mexico. The unifying factor is fish and fruits de mer—and confident execution. The menu comes in two parts, the first a selection of raw and chilled dishes, the second a more standard dinner menu, with large and small plates to share, plus a succinct list of sandwiches and soups. If you're considering skipping straight to the dinner offerings, don't. You'll bypass some of Octo's most exquisite bites.

Seafood towers always impress; here they come in a range of sizes with musically themed names. ("Underwater Love

OCTO FISHBAR

289 Fifth St. E., St. Paul
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by Faith No
More" feeds
one to two
and runs \$45;
"Leviathan by

Mastodon" could sate a party of 10 or more with 18 oysters, 12 clams, 12 mussels, three quarters of a pound of shrimp, four chilled dishes, crab claws, and jellyfish salad. It rings in at \$160.) A more discreet selection of prepared chilled and raw plates (\$12-\$14) includes a meaty, smoky, must-try swordfish belly with sea beans, and a classic peel-and-eat shrimp with a charming comeback sauce.

Wading into the dinner menu, you'll find more shareable plates to stoke the convivial vibe. The sneakily undersold "grilled bread" raises the bar on baskets, arriving as a plated concept with thick slices of pillowy grilled bread, drizzled in umami-rich uni butter and topped with thin radish slices and sea beans. On the far simpler side, the Shore Lunch Sunnies are a portal to a warmed dock on a July day: hot, never greasy fried sunfish fillets get a spritz of brightening lemon juice and a dip in not-too-sweet tartar sauce. You will ache for summer.

A meaty lobster roll (\$21) tweaked with kewpie mayo and miso, and enhanced with swoon-worthy milk bread by Salty Tart, is a new-kid rival to the old favorite at Smack Shack. It presents beautifully, with a flourish of shaved Japanese pickles and furikake fine enough to adorn a royal wedding hat.

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FOOD

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No sooner have you left Boston than you've been plunked down in Mexico, with a bowl of seafood-heavy posole verde in front of you, or a platter of DIY hamachi collar tacos. Pick luscious bits of meaty hamachi for your tortillas, garnished with pickled onions, radishes, and smoky chipotle sauce. Best of all was the inspired combination of soft scrambled eggs with rich chorizo fat, springy baby squid, and tiny potato crisps; I've had nothing like it in the Twin Cities.

Whisked away to Italy, find the octopus bolognese, a clever trick of chopped octopus and roe that blend into the exact look and similar texture of a meat gravy. In this case, the roe made the sauce slightly sweet, a surprise for anyone expecting the acid and umami of tomato and beef, but the overall effect was beguiling, a twist on convention that will please an open mind.

Among other unexpected delights, the grilled bok choy with anchovy and egg was a playful twist on a Caesar salad. Order the highly poppable shishito peppers and watch the bonito flakes dance in the steam. And forget what you know of sad hors d'oeuvres shrimp toast: This version comes topped with sweet and tangy Bulldog sauce, nori, and bonito, is served with a side of pickled veggies, and will have you closing your eyes and sinking deep into your chair to maximize enjoyment. Finally, the dessert menu answers the question, "Don't we all really just want pie for dessert?" with a resounding, "Yes! We do!" While out of step with the worldly menu that came before, the miniature pecan pie from Salty Tart is the best I've had since leaving the South. I will never say no to its flaky crust in the interest of flavor continuity.

Like any good "catch of the day" joint, Octo switches up its menu regularly, keeping a shark-like forward momentum in the kitchen. Some of the items mentioned here might be gone in a month. That plate of snow crab legs I lost myself in wasn't there on our first few visits. An old menu online teases "blowfish tails" with "Buffalo sauce and nori ranch," but we never got our paws on them. A discontinued aquavit White Russian on the cocktail menu still nags at me.

In any case, a fresh menu is preferable here—if for no other reason than it somehow quells the fear of old seafood. Every Minnesotan has at one point or another been greeted with a wrinkled-up nose or a vigorous head shake when offering a visitor some oceanic fare.

"Seafood? In Minnesota? I'll pass."

Ah well, let them eat some of Octo's land-based goodies—the locally sourced Peterson ribeye should entice. Meanwhile, we'll be floating away, blissful, carried out to sea on a raft of crab legs. **CF**



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APR 05
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APR 07
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APR 08
89.3 THE CURRENT PRESENTS
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WITH RITUALS OF MINE, BLACK BELT EAGLE SCOUT

APR 11
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WITH NICKI BLUHM

APR 14
MARGO PRICE
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WITH BLACKFOOT GYPSIES

APR 15
CIGARETTES AFTER SEX

APR 16
MATT AND KIM
WITH TOKYO POLICE CLUB

APR 17
HOUNDMOUTH
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APR 19
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AUG 01

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SATURDAY, MARCH 17

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SATURDAY, APRIL 7

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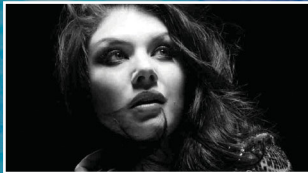
DAVINA AND THE VAGABONDS
MARCH 15-16



TINSLEY ELLIS
ALBUM RELEASE
MARCH 17



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JANE MONHEIT
MARCH 18



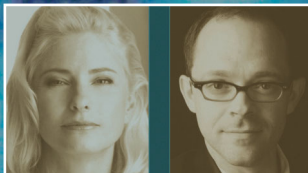
STEPHEN KELLOGG
MARCH 19



NEW ORLEANS SUSPECTS
MARCH 22



CHARLIE MARS
MARCH 23



PRUDENCE JOHNSON AND DAN CHOUINARD:
A NIGHT OF GERSHWIN
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LIAM Ó MAONLAÍ
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A LIST

FRIDAY Censored artwork on display P. 23

SATURDAY Celebrate St. Patrick's Day P. 24

TUESDAY *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* turns 50 P. 25

THURSDAY 3.15

COMEDY

THE SKLAR BROTHERS

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The Sklar Brothers have done what few comedy duos have achieved: developed a truly organic standup act. It helps that, as twins, they've known each other since birth. "We've thought about doing stuff separately—and we have done stuff separately—but I think we quickly understood this is a cool and unique thing," says Jason. "There aren't a lot of twins in comedy, and if we do it well we will stand out among other comedians and among other teams. If we stopped doing this and went and did our own things, we would know how to be on stage, and how to write jokes and do material. But we'd also be starting over in a lot of ways. We've spent 25 years working on our team, and it would be a shame to leave it." "It's nice too," adds Randy. "Because we can talk about things from our childhood and everybody's on board and they believe it." 18+. 8 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$15-\$18. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393.

Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON

COMEDY

COREY ADAM

SISYPHUS BREWING

Corey Adam has been a big part of the Twin Cities comedy community for nearly a decade. That's why it may come as a surprise that he's just releasing his first official album of material this week. "I released an album of just crowd work a few years ago, because I wasn't ready to put out a full album but I needed something I could sell on the road," he says of 2015's *No Joke*. The new release, aptly titled *Jokes*, will take a more traditional approach, featuring material that Adam has built through countless hours onstage over the past several years. To celebrate, Adam will host a special album-release party at Sisyphus Brewing, the same room where he recorded *Jokes* last year. While he has performed for strangers all over the country, he says



COURTESY THE ARTIST AND GREENE NAFTALI, NEW YORK

that the pressure he feels around this album is more personal than anything he's done before. "With the crowd work album, if people didn't like my sick burns or whatever, I didn't care. If people don't like this album, I'll probably cry and quit comedy and go get a day job." 8 p.m. \$5. 712 Ontario Ave. W., Minneapolis; 612-321-8324. —PATRICK STRAIT

COMEDY

JESSIMAE PELUSO

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY

"I'm just out here trying not to get diabetes or die," says comedian Jessimae Peluso. The Syracuse native relocated to Los Angeles from New York City. She loves the West Coast. "New Yorkers talk about L.A. and vice versa," she says. "People are assholes everywhere, the only difference is the weather. I grew up in the Snow Belt. If it's 75 and sunny I'm happy." Onstage, she's still talking about her life experiences. "It's pretty relatable," she says. "I'm bold and honest, but it's also a little goofy." Life has changed for the 35-year-old Peluso. "My dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's," she says,

"and I'm a new aunt. I have a niece and nephew. It's great. I can be a part-time mom and then just give the kids back." She's also no longer dating assholes. "That's when you know you're an adult," she adds. "When you see your dad in Depends and you're not dating assholes, you know you're an adult." Nice guys offer other benefits as well. "My skin has cleared up and I'm sleeping better." 16+. 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 p.m. Saturday and Sunday; 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16-\$23. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Sunday —P.F. WILSON**

ART/MUSEUM

ESSMA IMADY: THICKER THAN WATER

MINNEAPOLIS INSTITUTE OF ART

Syrian artist Essma Imady reflects on the experiences of immigrant and refugee children in "Thicker Than Water," a mixed-media exhibition at Mia's MAEP Gallery. Through film footage and reimagined objects, Imady examines how kids' identities are formed, and how they

understand complex concepts like war, displacement, and home. Footage of interviews with refugee children in Istanbul are presented alongside everyday—but altered—items. There's *Receiving Blanket*, made from a soft, touchable material with an image of twisted metal that represents the sharp edges of a broken home. For *Comfort Object*, a teddy bear has been stuffed with a mother's weight in lead. These pieces meditate on parental anxiety in the general population and in refugees, and how that anxiety is passed on to children. Imady fled Syria with her now-husband in 2011 after protests erupted near Arab International University, where she studied art. She completed her B.A. at St. Cloud State University and her MFA at MCAD. The couple has a four-year-old daughter who prompted Imady's own questions about what it means to be Syrian. There will be an opening reception from 6 to 9 p.m. Thursday, March 15. 2400 Third Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-870-3131. **Through June 24 —ERICA RIVERA**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ►

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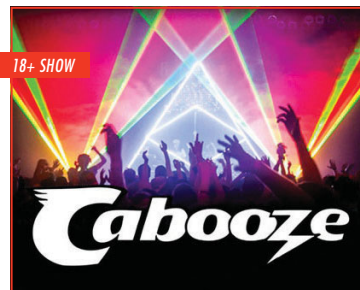
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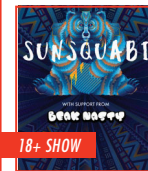


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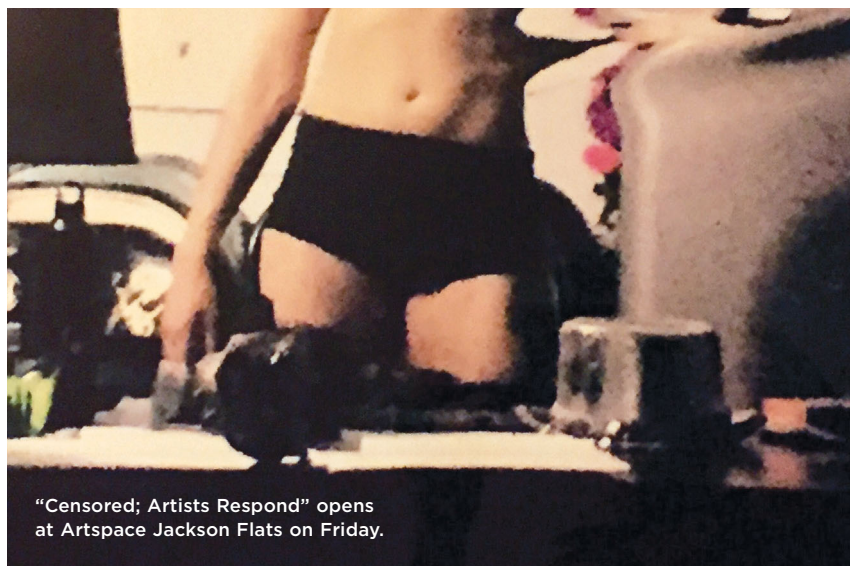


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"Censored; Artists Respond" opens at Artspace Jackson Flats on Friday.

TERA KILBRIDE, *DISTORTION*

FRIDAY 3.16

ART/MUSEUM

ALLEN RUPPERSBERG: INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY 1968-2018

WALKER ART CENTER

Fasten your seatbelts. We're heading back to the future with this retrospective of Allen Ruppersberg's still-fresh multimedia works. From an assemblage of blinding neon posters (*The Singing Project*) to more traditionally conceptual work (e.g., an aquarium serving as a luminous blank canvas), this exhibition covers more than 30 years of the his work, which has a distinctive eye toward mass culture. Installations. Photo narratives. Drawings. Films. This collection has it all, including *You & Me*, a public artwork first shown as a billboard on the High Line in New York City. Dig through the layers or dwell on the surface quality. There's much to behold. An After Hours preview party will feature live music from Frankie Lee, tunes from DJ Bill DeVille and Cyn Collins, a book-making workshop, and appetizers and drinks starting at 9 p.m. Friday, March 16. The show is included with museum admission; tickets to the After Hours reception are \$15. 725 Vineland Place, Minneapolis; 612-375-7600.

Through July 29 —CAMILLE LEFEVRE

ART/GALLERY

CENSORED; ARTISTS RESPOND

ARTSPACE JACKSON FLATS

Controversy erupted in February at Artspace Jackson Flats, a live/work space in northeast Minneapolis, over a series of female nudes. As reported by City Pages, the body-positive exhibition, curated by Kristin Harsma, faced censorship when

residents of the building were offended by the artwork. Management told Harsma that she needed to adjust the placement of the works. This month, a new show featuring residents of the building and guest artists emerges at Artspace in response. Pieces will take on the topic of censorship directly. The exhibition takes place in two different areas. In the more public Yellow Gallery, the work will all be self-censored as artists explore the ways that they have been censored or silenced. The larger Gray Gallery, which is a bit more secluded, will highlight work that some have deemed offensive. There will be an opening reception from 7 to 11 p.m. Friday, March 16; and open hours Sundays from noon to 4 p.m. 901 18 1/2 Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-333-9012.

Through March 25 —SHEILA REGAN

THEATER

THE CANTERVILLE GHOST

THEATRE IN THE ROUND

Haunted-house yarns have long followed a pattern: An unwary family moves into a cursed abode only to suffer a series of supernatural incidents until the malevolent spirits are banished or the traumatized homeowners take flight. Never an artist to be constrained by convention, the witty Oscar Wilde subverted those expectations with one of his earliest novellas, *The Canterville Ghost*. Opening at Theatre in the Round Players in an adaptation by Marsha Chamberlain, Wilde's insightfully humorous play tells the story of an American family moving into Canterville Chase, a notorious mansion in rural England. Legend has it that the spirit of the original inhabitant, Sir Simon Canterville, has been haunting the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ►



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3/18 ARNE FOGEL
'SEPTEMBER OF MY YEARS' | 6:30PM

3/20 CONNIE EVINGSON
3/21 'ELLA FITZGERALD SINGS GERSHWIN' | 7:30PM

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A-LIST

CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ►

manor for hundreds of years. Instead of being dissuaded, the enthused new owners actually welcome every eerie encounter with the resident phantom, causing the vexed ghost to grow increasingly exasperated with his failure to terrify. This twisting of genre standards works to upend expectations, giving Wilde license to poke fun at ghost-story conventions even while engaging in their frightful pleasures. 7:30 p.m. Fridays through Saturdays; 2 p.m. Sundays. \$22. 245 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-333-3010. **Through April 8 —BRAD RICHASON**

SATURDAY 3.17

CONVENTION

MINEFAIRE: THE ULTIMATE MINECRAFT FAN EXPERIENCE

SAINT PAUL RIVERCENTRE

Much like SimCity and Overwatch, Minecraft is a sandbox video game with a massive following. So massive, in fact, that it's the second-best-selling game of all time. Minecraft invites players to create structures using various-sized cubes. Along the way there is player exploration,

resource hunting, and battles. As you work on making your cube building, there are encounters to be had with things like zombies and chickens, and opportunities to jaunt off to an alternate dimension. This weekend, Minefaire will revel in all things Minecraft. There will be plenty of chances to play the game live, or try your hand at new virtual reality creations. If you prefer a dose of the real world, join families in a LEGO building session. Costumes are encouraged, and a contest will award prizes to the best setups. Vendors, workshops, Q&A talks with YouTube gamers, and other fun will round out the two-day happening. Find tickets and more info at minefaire.com. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday. \$49-\$69. 175 W. Kellogg Blvd., St. Paul; 651-265-4800. **Through Sunday —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

THEATER

ROCKET MAN

THE CRANE THEATER

We'll soon be ready for spring cleaning, a ritual that can compel personal re-assessments as one decides what to discard and what to retain. This

HOLIDAY

ST. PATRICK'S DAY PARADES

MINNEAPOLIS AND ST. PAUL

This weekend, the downtown streets of the Twin Cities will be rowdier than usual, as St. Patrick's Day festivities march through Minnesota. If you normally miss the St. Paul parade due to it being in the middle of the day, then you're in luck this year, as the holiday falls on a Saturday. At the stroke of noon, politicians, unions, local businesses, bands, and others will make their way through the

city in a sea of green. This is the 52nd year for St. Paul's parade, which travels Fifth Street starting at Broadway, then makes its way around Rice Park before turning on Washington to Fourth Street. Afterward, consider heading over to Landmark Center for family-friendly fun including traditional dance, music, and food and beer. Or start your day-drinking adventure at the Liffey, O'Gara's, Emmett's, or the Dubliner. Lowertown's 12welve Eyes Brewing is launching a charity series on Saturday, called Craft That Cares, which will raise funds for good causes. On St. Patrick's Day, one dollar of every beer sold will benefit the St. Patrick's Association. Meanwhile, one city away, find the 50th annual Minneapolis St. Patrick's Day Parade. This celebration marches at 6:30 p.m. along the length of Nicollet Mall. Though the parade is later in the day, people will start celebrating as soon as the bars open. Some nearby Irish pubs include Kieran's, the Local, O'Donovans, and Kelly's. Metro Transit offers free rides starting at 6:30 p.m. and running until 3 a.m., but keep that cell phone fully charged in case you end up needing to take a Lyft instead. Find more info on the parades at www.stpatsmn.org and www.mplsstpats.org. Free. **—JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**



DAVID JOLIS, STAR TRIBUNE



Ricardo Levin Morales moves a few spots over.

COURTESY OF THE ARTIST

introspection is followed to an extreme degree in *Rocket Man*, a sci-fi-tinged drama from contemporary playwright Steven Dietz wherein the lead character, Danny Rowan, places all of his possessions on his front lawn accompanied by a sign reading, "Here's my life. Make an offer." This unorthodox behavior provokes consternation and concern from family and acquaintances alike, but Danny is merely following an inner conviction that parallel universes exist and that one can, if materially and psychologically unencumbered, journey to those worlds. Even under the scrutiny of his estranged wife and daughter, Danny pursues his obsessive quest to find a place where all of life's possibilities intersect. This Stuart Gates-directed production for Theatre Pro Rata offers a charismatic cast headlined by Matt Wall. And while string theory, alternate realities, and time travel are mind-bending concepts, those inclined to contemplate the nature of existence will find much of fascination in the way *Rocket Man* charts a course for a more extraordinary life. For tickets, go to www.brownpapertickets.com. 7:30 p.m. Fridays through Sundays, plus Monday, March 19; 3 p.m. Sunday, April 1. \$20-\$40. 2303 Kennedy St. NE, Minneapolis; 612-234-7135. **Through April 1** —**BRAD RICHASON**

ART/PARTY

STUDIO GRAND OPENING

RICARDO LEVINS MORALES ART STUDIO
The artsy businesses on Minnehaha Avenue have been doing some shuffling as of late. When Moon Palace Books moved two blocks down the street to Minnehaha and Lake, Ricardo Levins Morales moved his art studio, previously at 38th and Minnehaha, into the vacated spot located next to Peace Coffee and the newly remodeled Trylon Cinema. The studio boasts posters, T-shirts, cards, and buttons featuring Levins Morales'

message-driven art. People who care about anti-racism, workers' rights, the environment, immigrant rights, and other social-justice causes will find affinity with the artist's beautiful pieces, which are sometimes poignant, sometimes pithy, and often emotionally charged. For the last eight years, the studio has been as much a store as a community space frequented by activists and rabble rousers, hosting meetings on occasion. In addition to making art, Levins Morales has been a stalwart in the progressive community for decades. The grand opening will include sales, refreshments, yoga for kids, and performances. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Free. 3260 Minnehaha Ave., Minneapolis; 612-455-2242. —**SHEILA REGAN**

TUESDAY 3.20

FAMILY/PARTY

TWIN CITIES PBS PRESENTS: MISTER ROGERS' BIRTHDAY

TWIN CITIES PUBLIC TELEVISION

For adults of a certain age, Mister Rogers taught us very important life lessons: feelings are okay, empathy brings us together, and kindness makes the world better. On the 50th anniversary of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, TPT is encouraging adults to come together, reflect on these lessons, feel nostalgic, and indulge in whimsy. During this grownups-only party, episodes from the iconic children's show will air on a big screen. There will also be puppet performances from In the Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre, which recently delighted audiences with the *Mister Rogers*-inspired *Make Believe Neighborhood*. There will also be an open bar, snacks, and birthday cake. While this event is free, registration is requested; visit www.eventbrite.com for more details. 7 to 9 p.m. Free; donations welcome. 172 E. Fourth St., St. Paul; 651-222-1717. —**JESSICA ARMBRUSTER**

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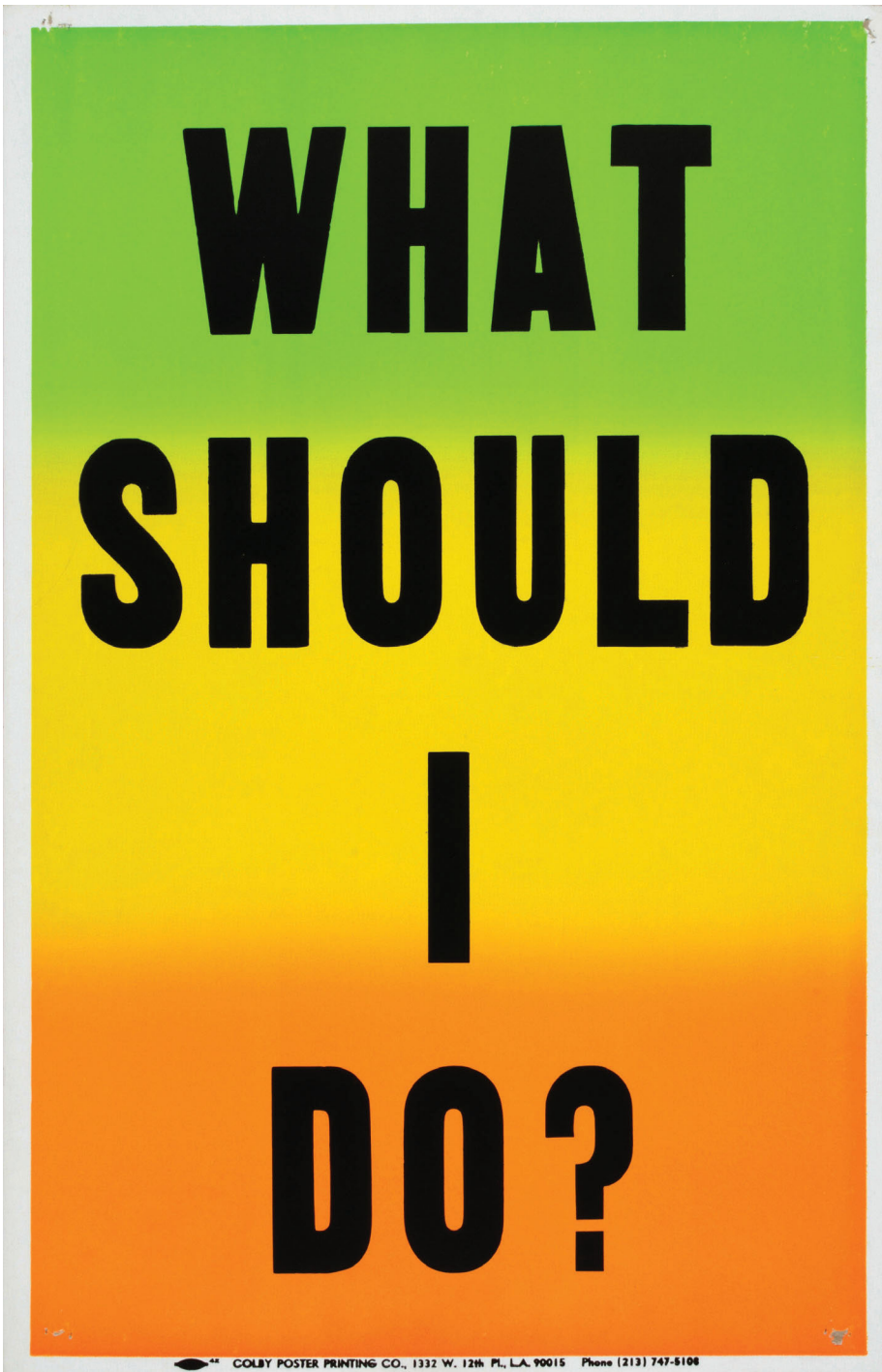
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Allen Ruppersberg, *The Novel That Writes Itself*, 2014 (detail)
Walker Art Center Library, Rosemary Furtak Collection
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Allen Ruppersberg: Intellectual Property 1968–2018 is organized by the Walker Art Center. Lead support for the exhibition is provided by the Henry Luce Foundation.



Major support is provided by the Prospect Creek Foundation and the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Additional support is generously provided by Carlo Bronzini Vender, Jill and Peter Kraus, Margo Leavin, and Maja Oeri.

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IN A BAD WAY

Complicated caper *Gringo* is an unsatisfying attempt at action-comedy



David Oyelowo

GUNTHER CAMPINE/AMAZON STUDIOS

BY TONY LIBERA

Nash Edgerton's *Gringo* claims to be a mix of dark comedy and "white-knuckle action," but truthfully, the longtime stuntman's latest directorial feature doesn't offer much of either.

The setup is there: A by-the-book corporate stooge named Harold Soyinka (David Oyelowo) is entangled (though oblivious) in some shady Big Pharma drug dealings. Drowning in debt, on the cusp of losing his job, and cuckolded by one of his bosses (Joel Edgerton), Harold decides to fake his own kidnapping and demand a \$5 million ransom. Unfortunately, Harold underestimates his employers' scumbagery, and the appearances of a seasoned mercenary and a Mexican cartel only make his situation worse.

The problem is there's also a boyfriend/girlfriend drug mule subplot, another subplot about two guys running a hotel, and a love triangle. The attempt at intricacy is admirable and perhaps could have worked in more skilled hands,

but *Gringo*'s various parts don't add up to anything special. It's a complicated movie, just not in a good way.

Gringo lays the foundation for character development that never really plays out in a meaningful way. It's like the screenwriters completed two-thirds of a script but weren't sure how to finish it, so they just went back and elaborated ad nauseam on what they'd already written. The result is a 110-minute film that feels much, much longer—and yet also somehow hurried.

Sadly, the end of the movie is completely flat. The drug at the center of everything—a weed pill, somewhat stupidly—only factors in tangentially. Multiple characters find themselves the victims of easy outs, leaving us to wonder what purpose they served at all. (Harry Treadaway and Amanda Seyfried, for example, could be completely removed from the movie without changing much.)

Beyond the plot lines, you'd expect a stuntman would have a pretty good grasp on action sequences. Yet even here, there's nothing to write home about. Some car

GRINGO

directed by Nash Edgerton
area theaters, now showing

hijinks and a quick shootout or two are apparently enough to check the "white-knuckle action" box.

For what it's worth, the cast does a decent job with the material given. Harold becomes a weak stereotype the more you think about him, but Oyelowo seems to have a lot of fun with the role. Charlize Theron's character—the bombshell corporate cutthroat who uses sexuality to get what she wants—feels overdone, though Theron is good enough to make lemonade out of the situation. And Sharlto Copley stands out as an American gun-for-hire who has changed his ways. It's a shame that his story never pays off.

Gringo is the kind of movie people go into without too many expectations. You might hope for a pleasant surprise—some excitement, some action, some laughs. There's a million little things going on in this movie, but they don't make much of an impact. **C**

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NEWSIES

Chanhassen's well-crafted pageant is as tight as a drum



RICH RYAN PHOTOGRAPHY

BY JAY GABLER

Millennials will never stop loving *Newsies*—and they may never stop playing them, either.

The 2011 musical, based on the 1992 movie with a large cult following, requires some suspension of disbelief. Unmistakably adult actors play impoverished teen vendors who launch a “children’s crusade” with the goal of preventing NYC publishers from raising the price they charge newsies for stacks of “papes” to sell.

Now playing in an entertaining production at the Chanhassen Dinner Theatres, the show works because it doesn’t strain for any unlikely heights. You go to *Newsies* to see singing and dancing newsies, and that is absolutely what you’re going to get. Keeping a steady beat of plucky defiance, *Newsies* is to *Les Misérables* what SpaghettiOs are to French onion soup.

Befitting its Disney pedigree, *Newsies* is a model of clarity in storytelling, nearly to the point of self-parody. (At one point, comrades from the southeast arrive singing, “We’re from Brooklyn! We are newsies! We are Brooklyn newsies!”) Jack Feldman’s lyrics aren’t particularly poetic, but they fit Alan Menken’s catchy and rhythmic music with great precision, making the songs lucid and highly singable.

The show is a fine choice for the Chanhassen, which is about nothing if not hitting its marks. Director Michael Brindisi was born to lead this platoon of newsies, who glory in their exploration of a time-honored theatrical trope: the Street-Smart New York Kids. Jaws firmly set, rakish hats and jaunty

NEWSIES

Chanhassen Dinner Theatres
952.934.1525; through September 29

kerchiefs in place, they scamper forth to jazz-dance for justice. What’s not to love?

In the leading roles of ace newsie Jack and aspiring reporter Katherine, Aleks Knezevich and Ruthanne Heyward are so on-point they could almost be computer-generated. If you’re going to play a fresh-faced newsboy when you’re entering the upper age range of contestants on *The Bachelor*, you really have to commit to the bit, and Knezevich gives it—as Arie Luyendyk Jr. might say—a thousand percent.

That note of unblinking sincerity resonates down the cast, with a particularly resolute performance by Lucas Wells as “Crutchie,” the most literally named newsie. (It’s best not to speculate regarding what more colorful nicknames real-life newsies might have bestowed.) This is a show that’s truly about the ensemble, and by opening night they were already tight as a drum.

Scenic designer Nayna Ramey’s sturdy, weathered set gives the urchins an ample playground for running and jumping and sliding around. Photographs and text projected on a large upstage screen are more distracting than informative, though.

Newsies is a spectacular showcase for choreographer Tamara Kangas Erickson, who delivers one jolt of energy after another. The dinner theater’s Main Stage brings the audience close to the action, showcasing the confident pizzazz of this well-crafted pageant for all the newsies fit to sprint. **C**

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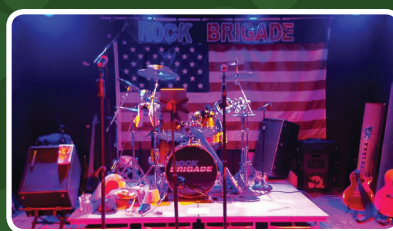
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KRISTY BLAKLEY

34, SALES

What are you wearing?

Express dress, By Far boots, and Sophie Hulme purse.

Describe your style:

Something unexpected, playful, and feminine. I tend to mix and match vintage with new stuff.

Are you more comfortable dressing for day or evening?

I guess I would have to say evening. I like any excuse to dress up!



AUDRA CLARK

21, STUDENT

What are you wearing?

Dress by Free People, Nine West pumps, clutch from Anthropologie.

Are you more comfortable dressing for day or evening?

As much as I love dressing up, I dress for comfort in everyday athleisure wear. My go-to outfit is my lululemon leggings, favorite Adidas tennis shoes, and comfy cropped sweater.

What's your favorite movie for its style/fashion?

The Great Gatsby because of the glamour and feminine aesthetic.



MAYA MARCHELLE

30, SOCIAL WORKER/ WRITER

What are you wearing?

Topshop dress from Nordstrom, Gucci GG Marmont purse, Vans.

Describe your style:

Urban trendy.

Are you more comfortable dressing for day or evening?

I wear whatever, whenever—day or evening.

What's your favorite movie for its style/fashion?

The Great Gatsby and, more recently, *Black Panther*.

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STRAIGHT FROM THE HEART

Dusty Heart capture the sound of the seasons on their debut album

BY ERIK THOMPSON

Dusty Heart got off to a quick start. When Molly Dean and Barbara Jean first crossed paths two years ago, they both had already made names for themselves as singer-songwriters, and had performed with other groups around town. But the moment they collaborated there was a definite creative spark.

Other musicians quickly took note of their special sound, and within a month of the duo's first meeting, Dave Simonett and Dave Carroll of Trampled by Turtles asked Dusty Heart to open for them on their upcoming Colorado tour.

"We were like, 'Wow, we need some songs. And a band name,'" says singer and viola/banjo player Barbara Jean with a laugh. "It happened so fast because the first connection was so strong. When we first sat down to sing and play together, the way our voices connected was immediate. A lot of times you have to work really hard to find that in another singer, you have to shift and shape to their voice. But the very first time we sang together it was like, whoa, there is something there that feels like we're siblings, or connected in a way that doesn't always sonically happen."

That sense of connection, as well as the duo's restless spirit, courses through Dusty Heart's eponymous debut. It's an album born out of their shared love of travel and the touring that helped fortify the band's early sound. "Our big thing is we like to take time to leave the city, go somewhere and unplug from everything, and cultivate some sort of space that allows for exploration," guitarist/vocalist Molly Dean says of their creative process. "Writing and playing with no strings attached, just being free and easy about it. And a lot of these songs come from those times we took to get away."

"We love going to the woods and being in the wild, just subjecting ourselves to the quiet and the deafening silence that you find there. We love wild places, we seek them out," adds Barbara Jean. "We love touring because we get to see so much of this country and this world. It's amazing how gorgeous it is. We talk about that all the time when we're on the road."

There's a lived-in, assured quality to the material that reflects the band's patient



BILL PHELPS

DUSTY HEART ALBUM RELEASE SHOW
with Mike Lewis, JT Bates, and Jeremy Ylvisaker
Southern Theater, Minneapolis
Friday, March 16

approach to getting these songs precisely right, both on stage and in the studio. While Dusty Heart's stirring live show has had fans waiting as patiently as they can for the group to finally release a record, the duo just laughs off any pressure of expectations.

"It's funny, because it only feels like a long time because we immediately hit the ground running," Barbara Jean explains. "We had our solo projects behind us, so we were already out playing shows. We've only really known each other for two years; it's not that long to start a project and release a record."

Listening to the eight songs on the album is like experiencing all four Minnesota seasons in a single day. You can feel the heat and humidity as a summer storm approaches on "Blue Wing" and the chill of impending winter in the wistful hush of "Timbre and Trail" and "Wild Whispers." "Broke Down"

suggests the boundless potential of spring, while "Bury Me" conveys the inevitable dark loss of autumn as our nights grow longer. All of these complex emotions are conjured by Dusty Heart's spare arrangements—mainly banjo, acoustic guitar, and viola—and the duo's soaring harmonies, which carry the songs skyward like a prayer for a better day.

The fixed but fragile core of the duo's material remains intact even when they fill out their sound with the work of guest musicians. In addition to the album's producer, Michael Lewis (the bassist and saxophonist best known for his work with Happy Apple and Bon Iver), and Tom Herbers, who recorded and mixed most of the album at Creation Audio studios, Dusty Heart enlisted an all-star team of Twin Cities musicians to support them, including Jeremy Hanson, JT Bates, Jeremy Ylvisaker, Erik Koskinen, and Eric Mayson, whose radiant piano strains help bring "In the Cool" to life.

"The best musicians are the ones who can play a million notes, but don't. Those are the people we chose to work with on this

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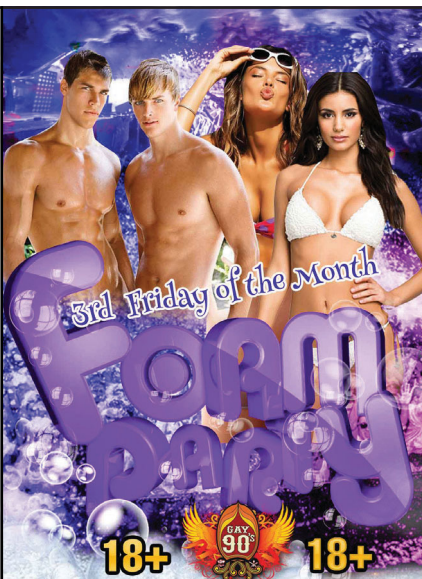


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record," says Barbara Jean. "Folks that really understand how to support and lift these songs without drowning out or smothering something that is already there. Everyone that we worked with on this record is a true, beautiful, wonderful friend. In addition to being great musicians, they are all people we have connected with and really care about. These are people who have supported our work, and helped us, and inspired us—it was great having their spirit behind us."

Even with those guest contributions, it's the creative vision and unique voices of Molly Dean and Barbara Jean that ultimately shine through here. *Dusty Heart* sounds both timeless and contemporary, offering a quick virtual jaunt to the countryside when urban life starts closing in on you.

"I feel like there's a lot of grace in this record. It's vast and vivid. It's a landscape," says Molly Dean proudly. "There are records I love to listen to while I'm driving because it's the perfect backdrop to being on the road and seeing new places, and this feels like that to me. It feels like it has opened the door to something new and I can't wait to see where it takes us." ☐

CRITICS' PICKS

K.D. LANG

STATE THEATRE, WEDNESDAY 3.14

While k.d. lang once couldn't avoid Patsy Cline comparisons, she's quietly amassed a stacked, singular catalog since the '80s. In 2016, the four-time Grammy winner linked with fellow veteran singer-songwriters Neko Case and Laura Veirs for the elegant, harmonious *case/lang/veirs*, warranting a follow-up. Lang is also celebrating the 25th anniversary of her adult-contemporary shift *Ingenue*, featuring two of her most enduring songs: "Miss Chatelaine" and "Constant Craving." With Grigoryan Brothers. 7:30 p.m. \$55-\$353. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. —MICHAEL MADDEN

JONATHAN RICHMAN

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Nearly 50 years after he helped invent punk rock, ex-Modern Lovers frontman Jonathan Richman has remained reliably quirky and eclectic with his solo work. Richman is perhaps the quintessential cult artist, and his fans have followed him from distinct releases like the self-explanatory *Jonathan Goes Country* to the Latin-pop curio *Jonathan, Te Vas a Emocionar!* In 2016, Richman returned with his first album since 2010, the low-stakes, reliably freewheeling *Ishkode! Ishkode!* 14+. 8 p.m. \$18/\$20. 416 Cedar Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. —MICHAEL MADDEN



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What Is Love?

My boyfriend might be a psychopath



Dan Savage

I'm a 33-year-old woman from Melbourne, Australia, dating a 24-year-old man. We've been dating for about eight months; it is exclusive and official. He's kind and sweet, caring and giving, and his penis is divine. The thing is, he confessed to me recently that he doesn't really "feel." The way he explained it is, the only emotions he feels are fear and anxiousness that he'll disappoint the people he cares about. He says he's never been in love. He said his dad is the same way. The only time I see him really "feel" are when he's high, which he is semi-frequently. He uses MDMA and he comes alive. He seems the way a "normal" person does when they're in love, but when he's sober, it's like he's trying to mimic the things a person in love would say or do. I confessed I am falling in love with him recently and told him I wasn't saying this with any expectation of him feeling the same; I just wanted him to know. He responded that he cares for me a lot—but that's it. I'm now worried that he'll never love me. I don't want kids, so time isn't critical for me, but I don't want to be with someone who won't ever love me.

LACKING ONE VAUNTED EMOTION

You didn't use the P-word (psychopath) or the S-word (sociopath), LOVE, but both came to mind as I was reading your letter. Someone who isn't capable of feeling? Isn't that textbook P-word/S-word stuff?

"The fear with someone who doesn't 'feel' is that they may be a psychopath or a sociopath, terms that are used interchangeably," said Jon Ronson, author of *The Psychopath Test: A Journey Through the Madness Industry*. "And lots of the items on the psychopath checklist relate to an inability to experience deep emotions—like shallow affect, lack of empathy, and lack of remorse. However, I have good news for LOVE! This line: 'The only emotions he really feels are fear and anxiousness that he'll disappoint the people he cares about' is the critical one. Psychopaths do not feel anxiety. In fact, my favorite thing a psychologist said to me about this was: 'If you're worried you may be psychopath, that means you aren't one.' Also, psychopaths don't care about disappointing loved ones!

All those emotions that relate to an overactive amygdala—fear, remorse, guilt, regret, empathy—psychopaths don't feel them."

So your boyfriend's not a psychopath. Not that you asked. But, you know, just in case you were worried. Anyway...

My hunch is that your boyfriend's problem isn't an inability to feel love, LOVE, but an inability to recognize the feelings he's having as love. (Or potentially love, as it's only been eight months.) What is romantic love but a strong desire to be with someone? The urge to be sweet to them, to take care of them, to do for them? Maybe he's just going through the motions with you—a conscious mimic-it-till-you-make-it strategy—or maybe the double whammy of a damaged dad and that toxic masculinity stuff sloshing around out there left him blocked, LOVE, or emotionally constipated. And while MDMA can definitely be abused—moderation in all things, kids, including moderation—the effect it has on him is a hopeful sign. MDMA is not an emotional hallucinogen; the drug has been used in couples counseling and to treat PTSD, not because it makes us feel things that aren't there (in the way a hallucinogen makes us see things that aren't there), but because it allows genuine feelings to surface and, for a few hours, to be felt intensely. So he *can* feel love—he just has to learn how to tap into those feelings and/or recognize them without an assist from MDMA.

Jon Ronson had one last bit of advice for you, LOVE: "Marry him and his divine penis!"

I agree with Jon, of course, but a long, leisurely engagement is definitely in order. You've only been seeing this guy and his divinity dick for eight months—don't propose to him for at least another year, LOVE, and make marriage conditional upon him seeing a shrink four times as often as he sees his MDMA dealer.

Follow Jon Ronson on Twitter @jon-ronson.

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

♈ ARIES (March 21-April 19): The British science-fiction TV show *Dr. Who* has appeared on BBC in 40 of the last 54 years. Over that span, the titular character has been played by 13 different actors. From 2005 until 2010, Aries actor David Tennant was the magic, immortal, time-traveling Dr. Who. His ascendancy to the role fulfilled a hopeful prophecy he had made about himself when he was 13 years old. Now is an excellent time for you, too, to predict a glorious, satisfying, or successful occurrence in your own future. Think big and beautiful!

♉ TAURUS (April 20-May 20): New York City is the most densely populated city in North America. Its land is among the most expensive on earth; one estimate says the average price per acre is \$16 million. Yet there are two uninhabited islands less than a mile off shore in the East River: North Brother Island and South Brother Island. Their combined 16 acres are theoretically worth \$256 million. But no one goes there; it's not even parkland. I bring this to your attention, Taurus, because I suspect it's an apt metaphor for a certain situation in your life: a potentially rich resource or influence that you're not using. Now is a good time to update your relationship with it.

♊ GEMINI (May 21-June 20): The iconic 1942 movie *Casablanca* won three Academy Awards and has often appeared on critics' lists of the greatest films ever made. That's amazing considering the fact that the production was so hectic. When shooting started, the script was incomplete. The writing team frequently presented the finished version of each new scene on the day it was to be filmed. Neither the director nor the actors knew how the plot would resolve until the end of the process. I bring this to your attention, Gemini, because it reminds me of a project you have been working on. I suggest you start improvising less and planning more. How do you want this phase of your life to climax?

♋ CANCER (June 21-July 22): If all goes well in the coming weeks, you will hone your wisdom about how and when and why to give your abundant gifts to deserving recipients—as well as how and when and why to not give your abundant gifts to deserving recipients. If my hopes come to pass, you will refine your ability to share your tender depths with worthy allies—and you will refine your understanding of when to not share your tender depths with worthy allies. Finally, Cancerian, if you are as smart as I think you are, you will have a sixth sense about how to receive as many blessings as you disseminate.

♌ LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): How adept are you at playing along the boundaries between the dark and the light, between confounding dreams and liberated joy, between "Is it real?" and "Do I need it?" You now have an excellent opportunity to find out more about your capacity to thrive on delightful complexity. But I should warn you: The temptation to prematurely simplify things might be hard to resist. There may be cautious pressure coming from a timid voice in your head that's not fierce enough to want you to grow into your best and biggest self. But here's what I predict: You will bravely explore the possibilities for self-transformation that are available outside the predictable niches.

♍ VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Cultivating a robust sense of humor makes you more attractive to people you want to be attractive to. An inclination to be fun-loving is another endearing quality that's worthy of being part of your intimate repertoire. There's a third virtue related to these two: playfulness. Many humans of all genders are drawn to those who display joking, lighthearted behavior. I hope you will make maximum use of these qualities during the coming weeks, Virgo. You have a cosmic mandate to be as alluring and inviting as you dare.

♎ LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): I suggest you gaze at exquisitely wrought Japanese woodcuts... and listen to jazz trumpeter Miles Davis collaborating with saxophonist John Coltrane... and inhale the aroma of the earth as you stroll through groves of very old trees. Catch my drift, Libra? Surround yourself with soulful beauty—or else! Or else what? Or else I'll be sad. Or else you might be susceptible to buying into the demoralizing thoughts that people around you are propagating. Or else you may become blind to the subtle miracles that are unfolding, and fail to love them well enough to coax them into their fullest ripening. Now get out there and hunt for soulful beauty that awakens your deepest reverence for life. Feeling awe is a necessity for you right now, not a luxury.

♏ SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): In the Sikh religion, devotees are urged to attack weakness and sin with five "spiritual weapons": contentment, charity, kindness, positive energy, and humility. Even if you're not a Sikh, I think you'll be wise to employ this strategy in the next two weeks. Why? Because your instinctual nature will be overflowing with martial force, and you'll have to work hard to channel it constructively rather than destructively. The best way to do that is to be a vehement perpetrator of benevolence and healing.

♐ SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): In 1970, a biologist was hiking through a Brazilian forest when a small monkey landed on his head, having jumped from a tree branch. Ademar Coimbra-Filho was ecstatic. He realized that his visitor was a member of the species known as the golden-rumped lion tamarin, which had been regarded as extinct for 65 years. His lucky accident led to a renewed search for the elusive creatures, and soon more were discovered. I foresee a metaphorically comparable experience coming your way, Sagittarius. A resource or influence or marvel you assumed was gone will reappear. How will you respond? With alacrity, I hope!

♑ CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The Velcro fastener is a handy invention that came into the world thanks to a Swiss engineer named George de Mestral. While wandering around the Alps with his dog, he got curious about the bristly seeds of the burdock plants that adhered to his pants and his dog. After examining them under a microscope, he got the idea to create a clothing fastener that imitated their sticking mechanism. In accordance with the astrological omens, Capricorn, I invite you to be alert for comparable breakthroughs. Be receptive to help that comes in unexpected ways. Study your environment for potentially useful clues and tips. Turn the whole world into your classroom and laboratory. It's impossible to predict where and when you may receive a solution to a long-running dilemma!

♒ AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): On May 29, 1953, Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay climbed to the top of Mount Everest. They were celebrated as intrepid heroes. But they couldn't have done it without massive support. Their expedition was powered by 20 Sherpa guides, 13 other mountaineers, and 362 porters who lugged 10,000 pounds of baggage. I bring this to your attention, Aquarius, in the hope that it will inspire you. The coming weeks will be an excellent time to gather more of the human resources and raw materials you will need for your rousing expedition later this year.

♓ PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Although her work is among the best Russian literature of the 20th century, Marina Tsvetayeva lived in poverty. When fellow poet Rainer Maria Rilke asked her to describe the kingdom of heaven, she said, "Never again to sweep floors." I can relate. To earn a living in my early adulthood, I washed tens of thousands of dishes in restaurant kitchens. Now, one of my great joys is to avoid washing dishes. I invite you to think along these lines, Pisces. What seemingly minor improvements in your life are actually huge triumphs that evoke profound satisfaction? Take inventory of small pleasures that are really quite miraculous.

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